

CLASSIFICATION OFFICE DECISION

Title of publication: The Pianist

Other known title(s): Not stated

OFLC ref: 1200961.000

Medium: DVD

Distributor: United International Pictures

Director: Roman Polanski

FVLB Applicant: United International Pictures

Producer:
Roman Polanski
Alain Sarde
Robert Benmussa

Country of origin: Germany, Poland, United Kingdom

Language: English

Applicant: Colleen Wassung

Classification: Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 15 years.

Excisions: No excisions recommended

Descriptive note: Contains violence and content that may disturb.

Display conditions: None

Date of entry in Register: 05 December 2012

Date of direction to issue a label: No direction to issue a label has been issued

Date of notice of decision: No notice of decision has been issued

	Components	Running time
Feature(s):	The Pianist	142:47

Total running time:		142:47
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Summary of reasons for decision:

'The Pianist' was originally classified as R15 (OFLC No. 300232, registered 24 February 2003). Leave for reconsideration of the classification of the publication under section 42 of the FVPC Act was granted by the Deputy Chief Censor. The applicant requested an unrestricted classification in order to use this publication as a teaching resource for year 10 students who are aged 14 and 15 years.

The feature is based on a World War II memoir by the Polish-Jewish pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman. It has well recognised historical context and educational value that has been carefully considered. It graphically illustrates the horrors of the Nazi persecution of Polish Jews and other minorities, so that audiences can experience them and understand them better. However this historical significance does not mitigate the strong effect of the content. Even with expert guidance, which is not always available, the high extent of violence and the associated cruelty, degradation and inhumanity presented in this film is likely to greatly distress children and younger teenagers.

It is considered that restricting the availability of the film to an audience of older teenagers and adults is necessary in order to minimise the risk of injury to the public good. Therefore the film retains its original classification of being restricted to persons 15 years and over. This classification places a limit on the freedom of expression provided by the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, however it is a reasonable and justifiable limitation, and is the minimum restriction that will sufficiently minimise the risk of injury to the public good from the availability of the publication.